



FALL BACK TO YOUR LEVEL OF TRAINING



From Director Donna Michaelis:

With hallways and campuses recently refilling with new and returning students and staff members, my staff and I want to remind you that the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety is here to support you. Any school safety professional will agree that when disaster strikes, you will not rise to the occasion, but fall back to your level of training. The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety invites you and your team to take full advantage of our upcoming conferences, in-person trainings, and new and ongoing online training opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

In this newsletter, we encourage your participation in our upcoming *National Threat Assessment Conference for Educational Institutions*, share an SRO success story, and examine statewide data by the numbers in our *2023 Virginia School Safety Audit* report. We also introduce the stellar DCJS *Active Attack Program* and links to some valuable federal resources.

With another “first in the Nation” for Virginia, we have launched a new partnership with [The International Center for Digital Threat Assessment](#) and [Safer Schools Together](#). Together, we have brought school and campus safety professionals across the Commonwealth a series of comprehensive on-demand courses to help threat assessment teams effectively include the world of social media in their threat assessment investigations. Virginia is already a national leader in threat assessment through our extensive legislation, resources, and training. The online modules available free through our learning management system [Benchmark](#) will further advance the efforts of our threat assessment teams to prevent potential violence and provide interventions to students in need of services and support.

Remember, all of our conferences and trainings are posted [on our website](#) where you can also [sign up for training update emails](#). If you have questions, comments,

or content to share, please reach out to us at vcscs@dcjs.virginia.gov. Thank you for your continued partnership in making Virginia schools, campuses, and communities safer.

[Training Notification Emails](#)

[VCSCS
Website](#)

2023 National Threat Assessment Conference for Educational Institutions



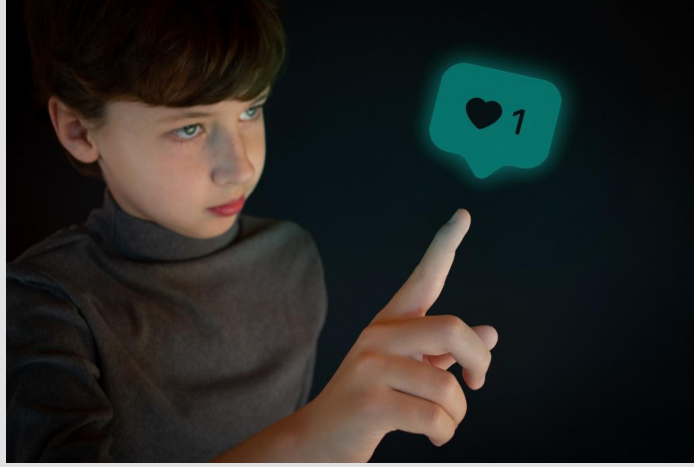
There is still time to join us in Virginia Beach October 23-26, 2023!

The third edition of the “National Threat Assessment Conference for Educational Institutions” will be held again in Virginia Beach on October 23 – 26, 2023. The pre-conference will be held on Monday, October 23rd with session topics covering domestic violent extremism, utilizing SROs on threat assessment teams, threat assessment case management, and community behavioral threat assessment teams. The main conference runs from Tuesday, October 24th through Thursday, October 26th with keynote sessions covering a wide range of topics related to behavioral threat assessment.

This conference promises to build on the positive success of our previous national conferences, and we hope to see you and your teammates there.

[Register Now](#)

New Digital Threat Assessment Training!



VCSCS is the first in the U.S. to offer this unique opportunity for *Digital Threat Assessment Training* in partnership with Safer Schools Together and The International Center for Digital Threat Assessment. These partners are both leading organizations that specialize in threat assessment strategies. According to a 2023 survey conducted by Safer Schools Together, experts believe nearly 90% of threat assessments include a digital element. With this in mind, we encourage schools to leverage this training, helping empower their threat assessment teams to make informed decisions, and providing guidance as they learn how to expand threat assessment investigations into the digital world of social media.

This series of courses includes an in-depth look at Digital Threat Assessment®, which is designed to provide your team with the tools they need to properly identify and understand online threat-related behavior. Additionally, six micro-modules are also available, each focusing on a different popular social media platform. These modules will provide a high-level overview of the tool, common ways students are using it, and how your digital threat team can leverage the platform during a threat assessment.

We are proud to announce that VCSCS has made this training available for all school safety personnel across the Commonwealth free of charge!

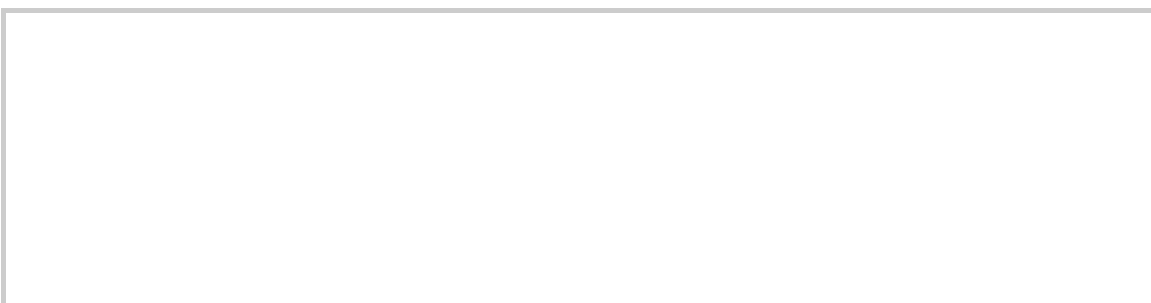
This e-content can be accessed via our new Benchmark learning management system (LMS). Simply log in and search “DTA” in the Available Training tab.

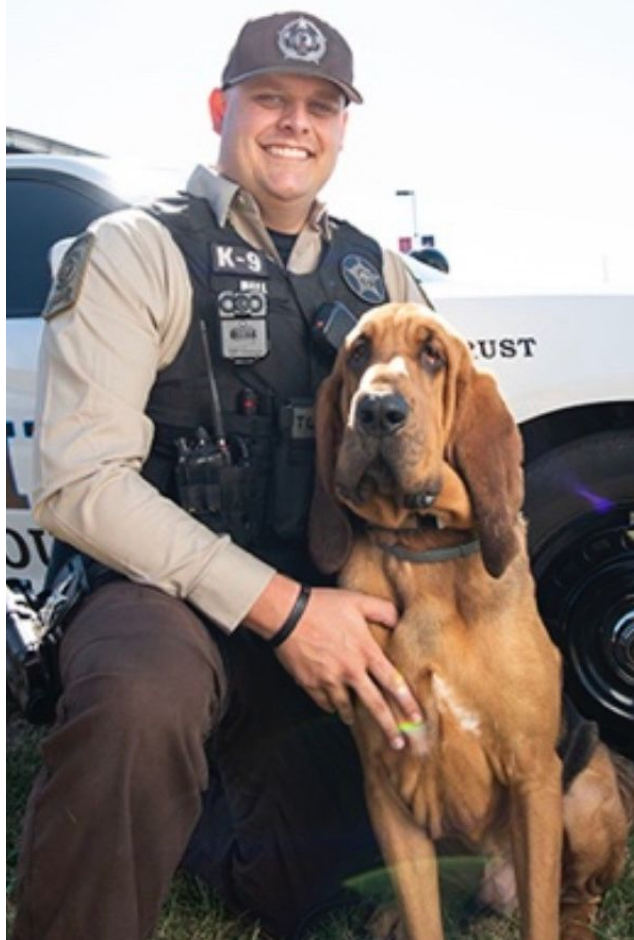
For questions, please email dannie.anderson@dcjs.virginia.gov.

**Create a Benchmark
Account**

**Log in to Your Benchmark
Account**

SRO of the Quarter





Sergeant W. Keith Hall from the Bedford County Sheriff's Office.

Sgt. Hall was nominated by Dr. Ernie Sawyer, Assistant Principal of Liberty High School, where Sgt. Hall has served as the School Resource Officer for the past five years. Dr. Sawyer identified Sgt. Hall's strengths in connecting with students, meeting them on their level, and helping families navigate challenges both at school and home.

Sgt. Hall has been recognized as a successful SRO because of his commitment to professional development and through his utilization of his K-9 partner "Lt. Hoover" who helps further build relationships by allowing students and staff to interact with them daily. Sgt. Hall made a huge impact on the Liberty High School community when he brought the Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO) program on board. Dr. Sawyer said Sgt. Hall arranged for VCU to bring their drunk driving accident simulator and coordinated with local first responder agencies to ensure the event was a success. He has also helped the club implement seat belt safety checks for the school campus which resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of student drivers "buckled up" when they left the campus. Sgt. Hall coordinated with Virginia State Police to bring their helicopter to a football tailgate and their drunk driving course to Liberty High.

Dr. Sawyer expressed, "To say Sgt. Hall has had a significant impact on the Liberty community is a great understatement. He has made lifelong connections with students and families in the community that will be remembered long after they leave Liberty High School".

Sgt. Hall's supervisor at the Bedford County Sheriff's Office, Lieutenant Hilbish, described Sgt. Hall as a positive influence on the students stating, "[Sgt. Hall] has built a very successful YOVASO program. He has become a strong role model to the student body and continues to help make improvements to help keep the students and staff safe".

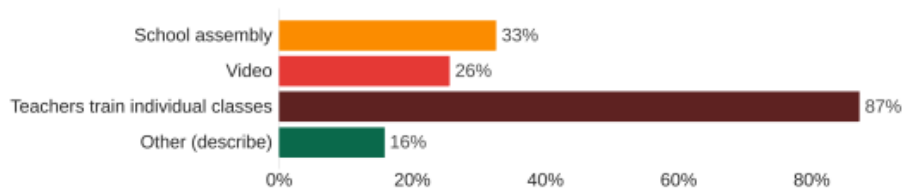
Congratulations Sgt. Hall! We are pleased to hear of you and Lt Hoover's work on behalf of students and the important role you both play in developing such a strong school-law enforcement partnership!

Do You Train With Students?

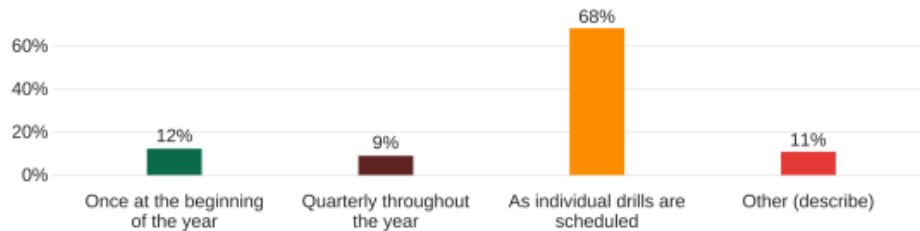
Percent of schools that provide crisis response training to students



What methods schools utilize to train students in crisis response



How often crisis response training is provided to students



These graphs display results from the 2023 Safety Audit of Virginia School Divisions.

With students returning to school, this is a great time to evaluate how we can include students in our crisis management plans. Students should be trained in how to respond in an emergency by following your crisis management plan. Additionally, schools should include students in various drills to evaluate the level of understanding and ability to follow predetermined courses of action for each drill. Conducting drills provides a great opportunity to determine if additional training needs to be conducted to ensure all students and staff respond according to current best practices. Don't forget to assess and include accommodations for your students and staff with access needs and disabilities.

[More Information](#)

Active Attack Training



Tragic events in the Commonwealth over the last two decades serve as a reminder of the need to be prepared. These life-threatening situations happen suddenly, unexpectedly, and without geographic discrimination.

The DCJS Active Attack Program is here to help your community prepare as we enhance protection for the entire Commonwealth. This statewide initiative promotes safety and preparedness using a “whole community approach.” The days of citizens “hiding and hoping” until help arrives are no longer an acceptable form of mitigation. DCJS strives to build a culture of preparedness where each citizen recognizes and takes ownership as a stakeholder in their own safety as “immediate responders” to Avoid, Deny, and Defend against active attacks. The DCJS Active Attack Program encourages all citizens and first responders to work together, specifically within the area of active attack threat management.

These training opportunities are made possible through a renewed partnership with the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University, which has become the national standard in citizen and law enforcement response to active attack events. The goal is for Virginia to become the model in training citizens alongside first responders to empower resiliency when faced with the mitigation of these unfortunate events.

We are currently booking training dates for 2024 for both community-focused and a selection of eight different first responder courses.



**Schedule Training for Your Community
Now**

From: SchoolSafety.gov



SchoolSafety.gov is a collaborative, interagency website created by the United States Federal government to provide schools and districts with actionable recommendations to create safe and supportive learning environments for students and educators. The site serves as an access point for information, resources, guidance, and evidence-based practices on a range of school safety topics. Through the site, members of the K-12 academic community can also use tools to prioritize school safety actions, find applicable resources and funding opportunities, connect with state and local school safety officials, and develop school safety plans.

[Learn More](#)

Next Issue: 2024 Strengthening Connections Conference Announcement and more!



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